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International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
Ninety-fifth session

Summary record (partial)* of the 2615th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 23 April 2018, at 10 a.m.

Temporary Chair: Mr. Cali Tzay (Vice-Chair)
Chair: Mr. Amir

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* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Temporary Chair** declared open the ninety-fifth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Opening statement by the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

2. **Mr. Salama** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)), welcoming the newly elected Committee members, said that their skills and experience would further strengthen the Committee's work in monitoring the Convention and addressing challenges related to its implementation.

3. Apprising the Committee of recent events related to its mandate, he recalled that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had addressed a plenary meeting of the General Assembly held on 20 March 2018 to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In his statement, the High Commissioner had asserted that racial discrimination was not only a matter of individual justice: experience had repeatedly demonstrated that discrimination, intolerance, prejudice and scapegoating not only led to disastrous splintering within societies — endangering national cohesion — but also frequently generated threats to regional peace and led to conflict.

4. The annual debate of the Human Rights Council, at its thirty-seventh session, had focused on the topic of promoting tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity in the context of combating discrimination. At the commemoration of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights had echoed the Committee's concerns about the sale into slavery of migrants of African descent and had called on all States to take urgent and effective measures to overturn the toxic legacy of slavery and to put an end to racism and xenophobia. Lastly, the Council had paid tribute to Nelson Mandela's lifelong struggle for freedom, human rights and human dignity by adopting a resolution convening a high-level discussion to celebrate his life and legacy on 27 April 2018.

5. As part of the ongoing commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, OHCHR had launched a social media campaign (*#Standup4humanrights*) that sought to raise awareness about racial discrimination and invited people all over the world to take a stand against racism. A number of prominent politicians, activists and representatives of the United Nations had lent support to that campaign.

6. In March 2018, OHCHR and the Department of Public Information had published a booklet titled *Women and Girls of African Descent: Human Rights Achievements and Challenges*, which contained an analysis of the findings of human rights mechanisms and illustrated the realities of discrimination against women and girls of African descent.

7. Recalling that 2018 also marked the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, he condemned the increasing vulnerability of human rights defenders and expressed the outrage of the human rights community at the brutal assassination of the rights activist and Rio de Janeiro city councillor Marielle Franco. While her struggle for justice and equality would continue to be a source of inspiration, her tragic death should lead the human rights community to reflect on what could be done better to protect those who took the risk of documenting and reporting rights violations.

8. At its seventy-second session, the General Assembly had adopted a number of decisions that had serious negative implications for OHCHR and the functioning of the human rights treaty bodies. The Assembly had decided to reduce funding for the travel of experts and staff and had authorized the creation of only 5 posts, instead of the 11 that the Secretary-General had requested in order to address the backlog of communications and other matters. OHCHR was reviewing how to adjust its workload and outputs to ensure the necessary support for the Committee's activities. While the support provided might be less

extensive than had previously been the case, it would remain of high quality and its scope would be re-evaluated in the event that the situation changed.

Solemn declaration by the newly elected members of the Committee under rule 14 of the rules of procedure

9. In accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure, Mr. Albuquerque e Silva, Ms. Izsák-Ndiaye, Ms. Chung, Mr. Diaby and Ms. Ko made the following solemn declaration:

> I solemnly declare that I will perform my duties and exercise my powers as a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination honourably, faithfully, impartially and conscientiously.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 10.35 a.m.

Election of officers, in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure

Election of the Chair

10. **Ms. Dah** said that the members representing African States wished to nominate Mr. Amir for the office of Chair.

11. *Mr. Amir was elected Chair by acclamation.*

12. *Mr. Amir took the Chair.*

Election of the Vice-Chairs

13. **Mr. Calí Tzay**, speaking on behalf of the members representing Latin American and Caribbean States, said that he nominated Mr. Murillo Martínez for the office of Vice-Chair.

14. **Mr. Marugán**, speaking on behalf of the members representing Western European and other States, said that he nominated Ms. McDougall for the office of Vice-Chair.

15. **Ms. Chung**, speaking on behalf of the members representing Asia and Pacific States, said that she nominated Ms. Li for the office of Vice-Chair.

16. *Mr. Murillo Martínez, Ms. McDougall and Ms. Li were elected Vice-Chairs by acclamation.*

Election of the Rapporteur

17. **Mr. Avtonomov**, speaking on behalf of the members representing Eastern European States, said that he nominated Ms. Izsák-Ndiaye for the office of Rapporteur.

18. *Ms. Izsák-Ndiaye was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

Adoption of the agenda

19. **The Chair** suggested that item 8 of the annotated provisional agenda (CERD/C/95/1) should be amended to read: "Consideration of communications under articles 11 and 14 of the Convention"; and that the corresponding annotation should be amended to read: "In accordance with the provisions of chapters XVI and XVIII of its rules of procedure, the Committee will consider communications that have been submitted to it under articles 11 and 14 of the Convention. In accordance with rule 88 of the rules of procedure, the meetings of the Committee during which communications under article 14 of the Convention are examined shall be closed." He took it that the Committee wished to adopt the suggested changes.

20. *The agenda, as amended, was adopted.*

21. **Ms. Dah** said that, considering that the Committee had been placed in an unusual position by the departure of the previous Chair upon the expiry of her term in January 2018, she wished to thank Mr. Calí Tzay for serving as Temporary Chair during the intersessional period and for performing that role diligently and in a positive spirit.

22. **The Chair**, thanking Mr. Calí Tzay for his efforts during the preceding months, said that the appointment of a Temporary Chair had provided the Committee with welcome continuity.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 11 a.m.